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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 67th MEETING

Chairman: Ms. ROTHEISER (Austria)

Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. MSELLE

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AGENDA ITEM 111: SCALE OF ASSESSMENTS FOR THE APPORTIONMENT OF THE EXPENSES OF THE UNITED NATIONS (continued)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.50 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 111: SCALE OF ASSESSMENTS FOR THE APPORTIONMENT OF THE EXPENSES OF THE UNITED NATIONS (continued) (A/C.5/47/L.22)

1. Mr. MAYCOCK (Barbados) recalled that, at the 52nd meeting of the Fifth Committee, it had been agreed that action on draft resolution A/C.5/47/L.22 should be deferred in order to permit further consultations. The decision to defer had been taken in order to ensure that every effort should be made to accommodate the difficulties faced by a number of delegations. The general feeling seemed to be that the draft resolution had not taken those difficulties fully into account and there seemed to be a genuine spirit to strive towards an acceptable resolution of that very delicate matter.

2. Draft resolution A/C.5/47/L.22 was the result of extensive consultations which had taken place in the autumn of 1992. Section I of the document was designed to encourage the Committee on Contributions to continue its efforts to streamline the scale methodology and to complete some of the studies requested in General Assembly resolution 46/221 B. Section II addressed the particular difficulties faced by some Member States as a result of the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Section III sought to propose the establishment of an ad hoc body for studying improvement in the application of the principle of capacity to pay.

3. Many Member States, affected by the dissolution of the former Soviet Union, had expressed the view that the draft resolution did not meet their main concerns and had consequently made proposals for improving the text. Those proposals had not found favour with a wide cross-section of the delegations taking part in the consultations. A number of proposals had been put forward but it had been impossible to reach the consensus. It had been evident that the only way to find consensus was not to take action on draft resolution A/C.5/47/L.22. He therefore recommended, with deep regret, that no action should be taken on the draft resolution and that item 111 should be closed.

4. It would be a wise move for the Committee during the current session, or the upcoming session, to spend some time discussing the Committee's approach to reaching decisions. The current method provided too many opportunities for a few delegations, or even one delegation, to frustrate the will of the majority.

5. The CHAIRMAN said that, if she heard no objections, she would take it that the Committee decided not to adopt measures with regard to draft resolution A/C.5/47/L.22.

6. It was so decided.

7. Mr. DUHALT VILLAR (Mexico) said that he regretted that a consensus had not been reached on such an important item. In the current session, special temporary meetings of great political complexity had been held which had not been favourable for reaching a consensus. Although his delegation was aware of those circumstances, it was sure that the process for improving the methodology of the scale of assessments would continue as effectively as from the start and that it would soon be able to have a fairer and more transparent methodology which reflected the relevant payment capacity of the Member States more clearly.

(Mr. Duhalt Villar, Mexico)

8. His delegation shared the opinion of the Barbadian representative that the Committee should scrutinize its procedures for adopting decisions, in order to avoid in future too many cases on which the Committee could not decide for want of unanimity. It might therefore be preferable to proceed in another manner.

9. Mr. STITT (United Kingdom) said that he would prefer not to return to the root of the matter except to recall the concern, several times expressed by his delegation, that considerable effort had already been devoted to discussion of the scale of assessments in the off year of the three-year cycle which had not been necessary. For that reason perhaps it was not a matter of great concern for his delegation that a substantive resolution on the subject had not been adopted.

10. He agreed with the representative of Barbados that it was necessary to consider the working procedures of the Committee.

11. His delegation firmly believed in the consensus principle of General Assembly resolution 41/213. It would be a heavy blow to the credibility and certainty of financing the Organization and its administration if it were ever to think of reverting to earlier procedures. That did not mean, however, that we were not implementing those procedures most sensibly and efficiently. It was a matter of concern that not all delegations seemed to approach the consensus procedure from the same viewpoint or with the same understanding.

12. Mr. HENG (Singapore) said that the item on the scale of assessments had always created great difficulties and had been made worse by the piecemeal approach to the methodology of the scale of assessments formula. It was time for the United Nations to undertake a comprehensive review of the whole methodology. The key criteria should be a Member State's total national income and the privileges it enjoyed in the United Nations. There should be no relief given to any country except the least developed countries.

13. His delegation hoped that the Committee on Contributions would take those comments into account and suggest concrete steps expeditiously in order to create a more equitable and just methodology.

14. Mr. YEGOROV (Belarus) said that it was regrettable that the Committee had been unable to achieve positive results, even modest ones, following the arduous, protracted negotiations on draft resolution A/C.5/47/L.22.

15. In recent months everything possible had been done to find an appropriate way of dealing with the irregular situation regarding the assessments of some Member States, including Belarus, that had formerly belonged to the Soviet Union. That situation had resulted from the decision adopted by the Committee on Contributions in June 1992 and from the recommendations adopted by the General Assembly at its current session. Unfortunately, the adoption of General Assembly decision 47/456 by a vote had also divided the Members of the Organization.

16. With the amendments put forward by the delegations of Mexico and India, section III of the draft resolution reflected the efforts made by the delegation

(Mr. Yegorov, Belarus)

of Belarus and other interested delegations to find a way of solving the problem. The delegation of Belarus would have joined a consensus on a text with that wording.

17. It was regrettable that the Committee had not been able to adopt a decision on the item under discussion. However, the decision-making process had not yet come to an end. The current stage must not be regarded as a definitive situation reflecting Member States' lack of political will. A decision in keeping with the principles and criteria of the United Nations must be reached. The delegation of Belarus hoped that at its forthcoming session the Committee on Contributions would give serious consideration to the representations of the affected countries, and bear in mind that the General Assembly had been willing to send a political message regarding the need to find an appropriate solution to the problem of the scale of assessments. The momentum of the negotiations must be maintained until the next session.

18. Mr. BATIOUK (Ukraine) said that the lack of consensus on draft resolution A/C.5/47/L.22 should not be regarded as a result of the failure of the negotiations held by Mr. Maycock, but as the result of a failure on the part of the General Assembly, which had been divided when it had adopted decision 47/456 by a vote. That decision had in fact been adopted on the basis of draft decision A/C.5/47/L.17. The draft decision and draft resolution A/C.5/47/L.22 had originally constituted a single document, but at some point in the Committee's deliberations someone had decided to divide that document into two documents, one for adoption by a vote and the other possibly for adoption by consensus.

19. The decision on the most important item referred to the Committee had thus had to be put to a vote. Fifty States had not supported General Assembly decision 47/456. It was legitimate to hold those who had obliged the Assembly to adopt that decision responsible for the lack of consensus on the subject. Moreover, the fact that the decision had been put to a vote meant that there were serious doubts regarding the future validity of General Assembly resolution 41/213, which dealt with the implementation of the principle of consensus. The Committee could not continue with its normal methods of work. It could not select certain items for adoption by consensus and decide that others should be put to a vote. If any delegations believed that the consensus rule still applied, the Committee would have to seek the opinion of the Legal Counsel in that regard.

20. Ukraine's modest demands had been ignored. However, the Ukrainian delegation had been in favour of adoption of the draft resolution. Ukraine had been treated unjustly and might as a result lose its voting right as from January 1994. In the meantime, however, it still had the right to vote and planned to exercise that right.

21. Mr. KARBUCZKY (Hungary) said that the Member States that had belonged to the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics had contributed to the search for a compromise, despite the heavy burden that a compromise would have represented for them. He hoped that the Committee on Contributions would manage to facilitate the adoption of a decision by the Fifth Committee at the forthcoming

(Mr. Karbuczky, Hungary)

session of the General Assembly with a view to dealing with the situation and overcoming the lack of political will displayed during the debates on the item under consideration.

22. Mr. DANKWA (Ghana) said that his delegation was ready to participate in a review of the way in which the Fifth Committee reached decisions. He emphasized that the consensus approach was not based on the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, but was merely a convenient arrangement adopted by the Committee. The relevant provisions of the rules would have enabled the Committee to reach a decision on draft resolution A/C.5/47/L.22 if there had been a country or a group of countries willing to sponsor it. The Committee on Contributions must continue its work on the basis of the relevant resolution adopted by the General Assembly at its forty-sixth session and on the basis of its terms of reference, taking account of the intentions stated in its report to the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session. Care must be taken to avoid giving the impression that the conclusions set out in that report had been adopted, since it would be for the General Assembly, at its forty-eighth session, to take a decision on the scale of assessments.

23. Mr. BLUKIS (Latvia) said that the situation of the 15 countries affected by General Assembly decision 47/456 had not yet been dealt with. Many of those countries, including Latvia, had submitted appeals to the Committee on Contributions for a change of assessments, under rule 160 of the rules of procedure. The ad hoc approach towards determining assessments had produced results that differed considerably from those that would have been obtained through the implementation of the principle of the capacity to pay and the currently applicable methodology; moreover, the ad hoc approach was not in keeping with rule 160 of the rules of procedure or the principle of sovereign equality laid down in the Charter of the United Nations. He supported the proposal that the Fifth Committee should review its methods of work, and believed that the Committee should request guidance with regard to the implementation of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly and of the provisions of the Charter.

24. Mr. RAE (India) said that it was regrettable that the Committee had not been able to reach a consensus on the item before it. At its forthcoming session, the Committee on Contributions should be guided by the provisions of General Assembly resolution 46/221, which was the most recent resolution on issues concerning methodology; furthermore, he endorsed the comments by the representative of Ghana on the implementation of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly.

25. The CHAIRMAN said that the Committee had thus completed consideration of agenda item 111; she requested the Rapporteur to report directly to the General Assembly thereon.

The meeting rose at 11.45 a.m.